Protection of bio-diversity and wildlife in Manas reserve

2099. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are undertaking any programme in Manas Biosphere Reserve of Assam to protect, preserve and enrich its biological diversity and wild life;

(b) if so, what are the programmes and which agencies have been engaged for that;

(c) whether Government have sanctioned funds for the purpose in the current financial year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Government is implementing a number of programmes namely Conservation of Biosphere Reserves, Project Tiger and Project Elephant in Manas Biosphere Reserve of Assam to protect, preserve and enrich its biological diversity and wild life. These programmes are being implemented by the State Forest Department.

(c) and (d) An amount of Rs. 361.36 lakhs has been proposed for various activities under these programmes during the current financial year. The funds to State Governments are sanctioned and released on completion of prescribed obligations like submission of Utilisation Certificate and Physical Progress Report of funds released in the preceding year/s. The sanction and release of funds under the above projects is at various stages of processing.

State of forest report

2100. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recently released 'State of Forest Report' reveals that the country has lost some 26,000 sq.kms. dense forest areas during the last year;

(b) the States where substantial deforestation had taken place and if